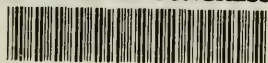


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ADDRESS

BY

REV. FRANK S. CHILD, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF
THE FAIRFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Twentieth Annual Celebration of INDEPENDENCE DAY on Fairfield Green

Arranged by the
EUNICE DENNIE BURR CHAPTER
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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Dr. J. S. Child

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

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THE Eunice Dennie Burr Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution has placed this community and the state under great obligations by reason of many patriotic contributions to the public service. For twenty years the members of this Chapter, with wise and sympathetic spirit, have arranged an annual Independence Day celebration beneath the grateful shade of our monarch trees on the Green.

On this one hundred and forty-first anniversary of the Republic's birth it was proposed to raise a steel Liberty Pole in front of the Town Hall and unfurl a new flag in the breezes. Prayers were offered by Archdeacon A. E. Beeman, the Declaration of Independence was read

I N T R O D U C T O R Y N O T E

by Mr. Frederick Sturges, Jr., the Redmen's band played appropriate airs and led the multitude in singing America and the Star Spangled Banner, the Home Guard stood at attention throughout the exercises and a large company of loyal citizens and visitors joined heartily in expressions of unswerving allegiance to God and our country. In explaining to the assembled people that although the Liberty Pole had arrived its placing was necessarily delayed, the chairman reminded his hearers that we had special reason for rejoicing in the fact that our First Expeditionary Contingent had entered France, having safely crossed the submarine-haunted sea. He also called to mind what had been done by the United States in the three months since war was declared—how ten millions of men had been registered for service, more than a billion dollars loaned to the allies, a bond issue of two billions easily floated with enormous over-subscription—

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

how a great war budget had been voted; how business had been mobilized; how fleets of ships had been sent to the aid of our friends; how the navy had doubled its personnel; the Regular Army recruited from 120,000 to 260,000 and the National Guard from 100,000 to probably 250,000; how 50,000 men had been sent to training camps to prepare as officers; how a vast shipping program had been set in motion; how food had been conserved and placed under the control of a leader; how Liberty Bonds and Red Cross subscriptions had amazed the nations; how aviation had forged to the front; how a mighty spirit of loyalty had surged through the entire land and the colonies dependent upon us.

It was James G. Blaine who observed that "the United States is the only country with a known birthday. All the rest began, they know not when, and grew into power, they knew not how." In commemoration of the day and the events

I N T R O D U C T O R Y N O T E

intimately associated with the historic Fairfield "Parade" the speaker addressed the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Home Guard, the school children and the many friends and guests present at four o'clock on the interesting occasion.

ADDRESS

BY

REV. FRANK S. CHILD

ADDRESS

THE FAIRFIELD "PARADE"

THIS soil on which we stand has been consecrated in peace and in war to the sacred cause of liberty. It was here that the fathers laid out the "parade" for the evolution of train bands. The meeting house was erected on the edge of the "parade" and for a time was used as the gathering place for citizens acting in their capacity as voters and law makers. The courts likewise held their sessions on this spot for more than two hundred years. It was here that law and order were vindicated by the use of such instruments as the stocks, the whipping post and

THE FAIRFIELD "PARADE"

the county jail. Perils from Indians and perils from the settlers of New Amsterdam forced the Puritan adventurers to organize a military company and practice here regularly the manual of arms. When Ludlow enlisted his little army to resist the encroachments of the Dutch, it was on these acres that he drilled the men and addressed them with his characteristic fervor and impetuosity. And when the wars with the Redmen raged, the citizen soldiers assembled here in preparation and marched from this place to the regions of conflict.

During the war of the American Revolution Fairfield "parade" was a center of civic and military activity. The eloquence which flowed spontaneously from the lips of patriots thrilled the souls of the people who naturally congregated upon the Green. Here the Continental troops bivouacked and drilled in preparation for war and on occasion stood guard over the town. Here

THE FAIRFIELD "PARADE"

they fought the British in 1779, defending the county seat to the best of their ability, driven to the hills by overwhelming numbers of Redcoats who took possession of the place and camped upon this familiar soil—to withdraw when the whole settlement had been given over to conflagration. Col. Whiting and his troops speedily erected their tents here amid the smoke and desolation, affording such relief and mitigation of suffering as was possible under the circumstances. It was on the Green the first worshippers assembled after the burning of the town and cheered one another with such hope and encouragement as martyrs for liberty are able to minister. It was here that soldiers, statesmen, eminent patriots and leaders of great repute were accustomed to tarry at the "ordinary"—General Washington at the Sun Tavern on the southwest corner of the Green—judges, senators, artists like Copley and Trumbull, poets like Bar-

THE FAIRFIELD "PARADE"

low, Dwight, Humphrey at Bulkley's or Knapp's Tavern. Here again when the War of 1812 was projected upon the United States the militia practiced their evolutions and prepared for the fresh defense of honor and freedom. And on the Green it was that the great celebration was held—the celebration over the treaty of peace with Great Britain—when a sermon was preached by Dr. Humphrey, a splendid procession with symbolic floats passed up and down the way, an ox was roasted—a real barbecue—and the day concluded by a huge bonfire here and an elegant ball at the tavern on the northeast corner of the Green.

And it was in this place that strange and stirring scenes were witnessed during the years of the Civil War with gatherings and partings, patriotic speeches and martial music, soldiers once more going forth from Fairfield to battle for right, honor, freedom. What a record of

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crucial events might be written—what a narrative of patriotism might be retold—did the air above us hold in its keeping the sights and sounds which have consecrated this precious portion of Fairfield soil. All honor to the men and measures which have rendered this spot sacred!

THE FOURTH OF JULY

This day is also sacred—this day which marks the signing of the Declaration of Independence and its promulgation to a waiting, incredulous world. Other republics had been formed in ages past. Some kind of independency occasionally existed for a time among ancient peoples. Greece and Roman erected governments which made a boast of freedom—a circumscribed and uncertain freedom. It remained for British colonies—inheriting the impulses dating back to Magna

THE FOURTH OF JULY

Charta—to phrase in fresh and memorable form a document which set forth the great principles of a truly democratic government. It remained for the idealists of America, the patriots who imbibed the spirit of Pym and Hampden and Cromwell, to put into immortal sentences the great fundamental truths which concern the government of a people, for the people, by the people. It was a great day—the fourth of July, 1776—when John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, and his company of associates, having affixed their signatures to the document, sent it forth to be read in the hearing of the waiting colonists, sent it forth to declare that “all men are created equal—that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights—that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” It was Lord Chatham who said that for solidity of reasoning and wisdom of conclusion the document was unparalleled. After

THE LIBERTY POLE

the first reading of the Declaration in Congress the bell above them which had inscribed upon it: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," was rung for two hours and the notes of the liberty bell sent the echoes resounding from one end of the colonies to the other. This day is commemoration day—consecrated to the joyous and beneficent remembrance of national independence.

THE LIBERTY POLE

And this standard which the Daughters of the American Revolution propose to rear on this consecrated soil is a consecrated emblem. The Liberty Pole is intimately associated with the colonists' struggle for freedom. Sons of Liberty erected many such standards in the days passed. Their descendants fired with the like spirit of

THE LIBERTY POLE

loyalty rear these heaven pointing witnesses to liberty today. Affixing to the slender, graceful spire the national colors, how significant and inspiring the sight! For the flag floating in the breeze speaks straight to the heart and the imagination of the patriot. The American Revolution was more than a protest against taxation without representation. It was a distinct and urgent movement in behalf of true democracy. It declared that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. The past century has seen the nations of earth yielding to this high doctrine, until America north and south, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, aflame with hope and zeal in behalf of freedom, took up the work, joined the advance and today with few exceptions declare the word liberty to be their watchword and slogan. This flag whose red exalts the sacrificial spirit, whose white suggests purity and honor in manhood, whose blue speaks

THE LIBERTY POLE

of truth, right, justice, the fundamental principles of good government—this flag whose stripes remind us of the thirteen original independencies—whose stars, many stars now remind us how the thirteen have multiplied unto forty-eight independencies, all woven into a constellation of harmonious and co-operative bodies, shining with the glorious light of liberty—this flag represents not only the unity of our nation, the peaceableness of our purposes, our sublime faith in the God of righteousness—it represents also the undying desire and aspiration of an intelligent and resourceful people to serve the waiting, harassed nations of earth, our desire and aspiration to share the privileges and enjoyments of freedom with our brother men throughout the whole world. This beautiful emblem stands for all that is noblest, grandest, richest in government and citizenship; for that largeness and freedom of life; that fraternity and equality of

THE LIBERTY POLE

spirit; that loyalty which produces the best and the finest achievement in human character and national worth.

With fresh enthusiasm, with unquenchable faith in the rightness of the Cause which we champion, with high hope for the ultimate victory of true democracy among all the nations of earth, with the assuring resolve that we will share our substance, our manhood, our all, in sacrificial spirit for the sake of our stricken brothers across the sea, for the sake of suffering humanity—with enthusiasm, faith, hope and fraternal affection—we bless and salute this matchless emblem of freedom—our beloved Stars and Stripes.

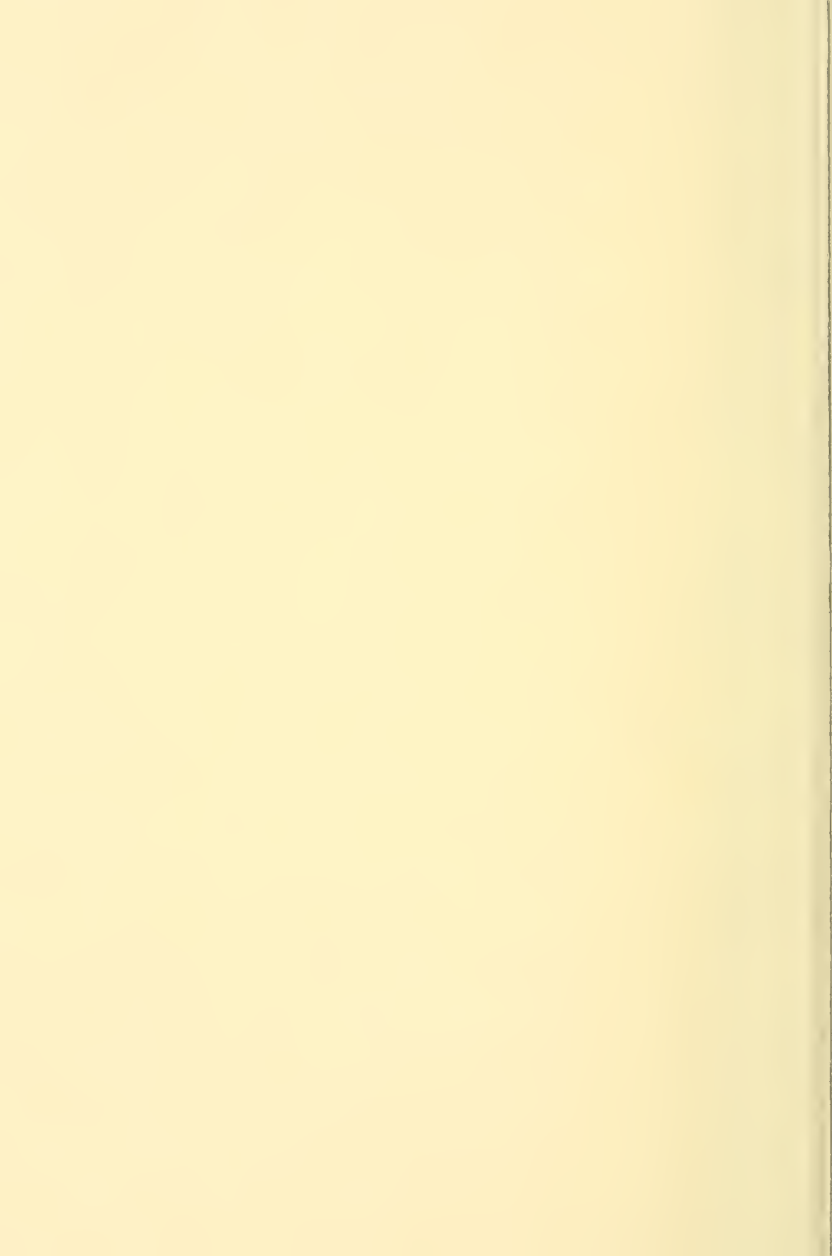
“O say, can you see, by the dawn’s early
light

What so proudly we hailed, at the twi-
light’s last gleaming?

THE LIBERTY POLE

O say, does the Star Spangled Banner
yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home
of the brave?"

Yes, a thousand times yes, it still waves over our land—it waves over our homes, our schools, our churches, our places of trade and manufacture, our halls of legislation and justice; it waves o'er land and sea. And it waves in England—from the House of Parliament and St. Paul's Cathedral—it waves in France from housetop and hotel de ville and above our own soldiers pushing toward the trenches. And it is destined to wave, not in conquest, but in vindication of honor, fairness, humanity, in many lands, over many people, a revered and exalted witness to the unselfishness of this republic and our deathless determination to fight God's war for world freedom and the peace of ages.





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